

## FDR and Pearl Harbor: Scott Horton's 2007 interview of Robert Stinnett, author of *Day of Deceit*

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Continuing on, here's the 2007 interview transcript, below fold. Can't find the audio anymore on the original Antiwar Radio [page](#), nor on Scott's current website [page](#), nor at Internet Archive, but it looks like it's on [youtube](#). 43 minutes. More about McCollum, Stinnett answers a challenge letter from a cryptologic museum curator, and a look back at some November 1941 headlines.

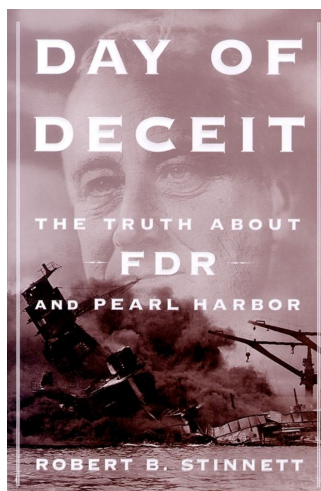
(2005 interview is [here](#) and 2003 is [here](#).)

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**Scott Horton interviews Robert Stinnett**  
**Antiwar Radio**  
**December 7, 2007**

### Transcript

**Scott Horton:** Hi, my friends, welcome back to Antiwar Radio and KAOS Radio 95.9 in Austin, Texas. And our guest today is Robert B. Stinnett. He's the author of the book *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor*.



Welcome to the show, sir.

**Robert Stinnett:** Thank you.

**Scott Horton:** Very good to talk to you again. It's been a couple of years. And, it's a very important story and I think one that, well for one major reason is – well for two major reasons, I guess, is best told by you, Mr. Stinnett, and that is, one, you're the guy who got the Freedom of Information Act records and proved it, but secondly, you justify Roosevelt's behavior in the attack at Pearl Harbor as being necessary, and I think most people who would accuse Roosevelt of prior knowledge and deliberately turning a blind eye to the impending attack at Pearl Harbor in 1941 would be people more like me who are not so much champions of his legacy, and so I guess I'd like to start if I could with getting you to explain your position on why you believe, first of all, that what you're going to explain to us is a fact today, that Roosevelt in fact did allow Pearl Harbor to occur. is justified considering the circumstances at the outbreak of World War II.

So that was the policy that President Roosevelt adopted in an Oval Office meeting with the fleet commander. And the fleet commander blew up at it, at the president, told him the Navy doesn't have any confidence in you. Well the admiral was fired and Admiral Kimmel was given command of the Pacific Fleet.

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes, no, that's a very good question, and it's really come to the forefront

since the Iraq war. What President Roosevelt faced in 1940, that's when he first approved the overt act of war policy and put it in motion. It was a plan by the U.S. Navy to provoke Japan into attacking us at Pearl Harbor. And that's the [secret document](#) that focuses on what he was actually after. It was to end the isolation movement in this country, because Americans didn't want to have anything to do with Europe's war. But Japan and Germany about 10 days earlier, on September 27, 1940, signed the Tripartite Pact in which they agreed that if they got into a state of war with another country not yet in the war, meaning the United States, then they would come to one another's aid. So that was the policy that President Roosevelt adopted in an Oval Office meeting with the fleet commander. And the fleet commander blew up at it, at the president, told him the Navy doesn't have any confidence in you. Well the admiral was fired and Admiral Kimmel was given command of the Pacific Fleet on February 1st, 1941. And the overt act of war plan was quickly adopted not only by the United States but also Japan. Somehow it got leaked to Japan and a month later in November 1940 Japan appointed Admiral Yamamoto to be the commander in chief of the Japanese navy. That was the operating chief. He was under the navy minister, who was really the command. But Admiral Yamamoto then began planning a carrier attack on Pearl Harbor, and the plan leaked to the U.S. Embassy in January 1941. This is two months later. And the ambassador, Joseph Grew, in Tokyo sent to Washington the message that Japan was planning a carrier attack on Pearl Harbor. Well, the next information coming in was in April of 1941, when Japan formed a carrier task force, and we intercepted the, the – we would call it the planning and the maneuvers that the carrier task force was going from April 1941 till December 7th, all under the surveillance, the electronic surveillance of the radio cryptographers in the Pacific Basin.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. And now you're saying all this as a historian but also as a man who served in the Pacific in World War II, right?

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes, that's right. I was in the United States Navy's carrier task force, the main task force attacking the Japanese navy at that time.

**Scott Horton:** And I think you told me before, sir, that you overheard somewhere in 1980 or thereabouts someone mention some Japanese military codes that had been broken that you thought, "Wait a minute," because you remembered in your own time in the Navy that you were only operating off of this or that information and now you were finding out decades later that in fact they had broken much more important codes and knew much more about the Japanese navy's behavior all throughout the war.

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, that's right, Scott. I had read a book called *At Dawn We Slept* in 1982, and in it they said that the U.S. Navy had an electronic monitoring station at Pearl Harbor that was intercepting the Japanese Navy radio dispatches prior to Pearl Harbor. Well I had never heard that before. We were always told aboard our carrier that our submarines had sighted Japanese fleet units, and then we would go and attack them, but actually they were getting it from these intercepts of the fleet. That interested me. I wanted to know more about that station, and I was working at the *Oakland Tribune* at the time and the editor agreed and sent me to Pearl Harbor, and the Navy allowed me – I filed an FOIA, that's a Freedom of Information Act request – to see the station, and I met the cryptographers there, who told me how they did it and where I could find these records.

**Scott Horton:** And now in your book, *Day of Deceit*, 1999, you refer to hearings held by Senator Strom Thurmond in 1995.

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes.

**Scott Horton:** And in fact I've heard people, debunkers of the Pearl Harbor blind eye story, I guess, say that, "Oh, come on, Strom Thurmond held hearings in 1995 and didn't have any hard evidence." So what do you have that Strom Thurmond didn't have?

The Strom Thurmond hearing was a joint investigation by both the Senate and the House, similar to the one in 1945 and '46, but in both congressional investigations all of this intercept material was withheld. It was withheld in 1945, '46, and again in 1995.

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, the Strom Thurmond hearing was a joint investigation by both the Senate and the House, similar to the one in 1945 and '46, but in both congressional investigations – and I emphasize this is a *joint* investigation, it was a top investigation – all of this intercept material was withheld. It was withheld in 1945, '46, and again in 1995.

**Scott Horton:** Now did Senator Thurmond know that it was being withheld from him?

**Robert Stinnett:** There's no record that that was even asked or even questioned about. So at the same time that the Navy was releasing to me these very classified records – I first started getting them in January 1995, so theoretically these were available to the Thurmond joint committee, but they were *not* introduced or even discussed, and Admiral Kimmel's family didn't ask that they be brought, which I thought was an error on their part.

**Scott Horton:** Mmm. And now, I'm sorry because I'm probably, I'm getting off into the details a little too much maybe and not asking you about the big picture here. Is it basically the case that what we're looking at is that General Kimmel and Admiral Short (*sic*), who were in command at Hawaii, that there was information about the impending attack that people in Washington D.C. knew about but they did not, and are you telling me that they were deliberately cut out of the loop of information so that they were left deliberately unable to defend Pearl Harbor that day?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, Admiral Kimmel had his own radio cryptographers there, and they were giving him information, intercepts from the Japanese fleet. Washington D.C. was also getting the information. They cut off the information to him, to Admiral Kimmel.

**Scott Horton:** From his own cryptographers?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, no. The cryptographers summarized each day – there were about a thousand intercepts obtained by the cryptographers, and they would summarize all of this for Admiral Kimmel, and the summary would be on the top of these 1,000 documents. And the crucial day was on November 25th Hawaii time, when the Japanese fleet left Japan for Hawaii. This included six aircraft carriers and another 20 or 30 warships that were going to attack Pearl Harbor. And the commander of the carrier force was in extensive radio communications with the invasion force that was going to hit Wake and Guam, and also the submarine force. So Admiral Kimmel became alarmed about that, went to the basement where the headquarters of the intercept facility was, questioned the cryptographers and realized what was happening, and sent a warning to Washington D.C. But the reply from Washington D.C. was, "Don't go on the offensive. Remain in defensive motion, for the United States desires Japan commit the first overt act." And overt act is the policy that the president had adopted a year earlier. And that is crucial. You know, that's another smoking gun on Pearl Harbor.

**Scott Horton:** Right. It's basically, it's saying, "We want a war but we want to force them to shoot first."

**Robert Stinnett:** They wanted Japan to fire the first shot in this overt act. Because from a political standpoint, President Roosevelt was under criticism for his leading America into war. Because he had sent our warships into the North Atlantic and also our cargo ships carrying supplies to Great Britain. And the destroyers were sunk by German submarines. One of them was the USS *Reuben James*, which was sunk in October 1941, about six weeks before Pearl Harbor. But that did not arouse Americans at all. That was a "Ho hum, there's Roosevelt again trying to get us into war," and they did not bite on that.

**Scott Horton:** They saw it as a pretext for war.

**Robert Stinnett:** They saw it as a pretext, that's right. But the president and his staff were very worried about what Germany was going to do in England, and if they could seize the British fleet, merge it with the Nazi navy and come over here and make war on the United States and Canada using Bermuda, a British territory, as a base to operate. It was a dangerous spot for America at that time.

**Scott Horton:** Do you really think that they were actually worried about that, that the Germans were going to be able to bring war to North America?

**Robert Stinnett:** Oh, yes, absolutely. That's in the [memo](#) of October 7th by Lt. Cdr. Arthur McCollum pointing out that Germany was bombing London daily and night and were amassing landing barges on the French coast to seize Britain and put an embargo all around the island and then seize the British fleet. You know, that would have been a disaster for America.

3. AN EXAMINATION OF THE SITUATION IN EUROPE LEADS TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS LITTLE THAT WE CAN DO NOW, IMMEDIATELY, TO HELP BRITAIN THAT IS NOT ALREADY BEING DONE. WE HAVE NO TRAINED ARMY TO SEND TO THE ASSISTANCE OF ENGLAND, NOR WILL WE HAVE FOR AT LEAST A YEAR. WE ARE NOW TRYING TO INCREASE THE FLOW OF MATERIALS TO ENGLAND AND TO BOLSTER THE DEFENSE OF ENGLAND IN EVERY PRACTICABLE WAY AND THIS AID WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE INCREASED. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS LITTLE THAT GERMANY OR ITALY CAN DO AGAINST US AS LONG AS ENGLAND CONTINUES IN THE WAR AND HER NAVY MAINTAINS CONTROL OF THE ATLANTIC. THE ONE DANGER TO OUR POSITION LIES IN THE POSSIBLE EARLY DEFEAT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE WITH THE BRITISH FLEET FALLING INTACT INTO THE HANDS OF THE AXIS POWERS. THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH AN EVENT OCCURRING WOULD BE MATERIALLY LESSENED WERE WE ACTUALLY ALLIED IN WAR WITH THE BRITISH OR AT THE VERY LEAST WERE TAKING ACTIVE MEASURES TO RELIEVE THE PRESSURE ON BRITAIN IN OTHER SPHERES OF ACTION. TO SUM UP: THE THREAT TO OUR SECURITY IN THE ATLANTIC REMAINS SMALL SO LONG AS THE BRITISH FLEET REMAINS DOMINANT IN THAT OCEAN AND FRIENDLY TO THE UNITED STATES.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. And now that McCollum memo, that's another all-important piece of evidence here, that's from the fall of 1940, correct?

**Robert Stinnett:** That is right. And that is the number one smoking gun of Pearl Harbor, because

that set the overt act of war policy that the president adopted and issued executive orders carrying out many of the policies, these eight actions that McCollum said would cause Japan to commit an overt act of war.

**Scott Horton:** And now this guy McCollum, he had – well, refresh my memory, but if I remember right he had been stationed in Japan or had spent a lot of time in a diplomatic post there or something and so was very familiar with the culture of the Japanese government and what it would take to provoke them into going ahead and committing that first overt act.

**Robert Stinnett:** That's right. He was the son of Baptist ministry who were covering, you know, religious services in Japan, so he was born in Japan and spoke the language and knew

the culture before he was really into English, and then his parents or his father died and so he returned to the United States, went to school and was admitted to the Annapolis Naval Academy, graduated and was assigned to Tokyo in 1923 as a naval attaché. That's when the great earthquake was there. He led United States efforts to relieve Japanese misery, but the proud Japanese didn't really want any outsiders or anjins, a-n-j-i-n, meaning foreigners, in their country. But he did do what he could and he, you know, he instructed the royal family in how to dance the Charleston, and he had great contact with the Japanese leaders.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. And now I have the McCollum memo. Now he came back from Japan and was an intelligence officer in the United States Navy, right?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, he had been a number of jobs, but mainly his interest was in intelligence and he was assigned to be commanding officer of the destroyer *Jacob Jones*, which was sent over to the coast of France and in the Mediterranean to eavesdrop on German navy communications. So that's when he first started. This was in 1939. He was very successful there, and then he came, he was called back to Washington and was named to be President Roosevelt's intelligence officer for intercepts, in other words bringing the intercepts to the president.

SH: Oh! Now see there's something I didn't realize. McCollum actually, rather than being levels and levels down away from Roosevelt, he actually was in direct communication with Roosevelt, briefing Roosevelt on what naval intelligence was finding out.

**RS:** That is correct. He was the routing officer for President Roosevelt. And many times he himself would take the intercepts to the president.

**Scott Horton:** Oh! Now see there's something I didn't realize. McCollum actually, rather than being, you know, levels and levels down away from Roosevelt, he actually was in direct communication with Roosevelt, briefing Roosevelt on what naval intelligence was finding out.

**Robert Stinnett:** That is correct. He was the routing officer for President Roosevelt.

**Scott Horton:** Ah.

**Robert Stinnett:** And many times he himself would take the intercepts to the president, or other times it would be the naval aide who picked them up from the Navy Department and take them to the White House.

**Scott Horton:** Okay, now, I have here the McCollum memo which you say ended up becoming a batch of different executive orders carrying this out, and I just wanted to read shortly here from, it's number 9. This is the eight-point plan. I think you say in the book they later expanded it to 10. Number 9 here from the memo:

It is not believed that in the present state of political opinion the United States government is capable of declaring war against Japan without more ado; and it is barely possible that vigorous action on our part might lead the Japanese to modify their attitudes. Therefore, the following course of action is suggested:

And I'm sorry because this is very small print on the computer here I'm trying to read.



- A. Make an arrangement with Britain for the use of British bases in the Pacific, particularly Singapore.
- B. Make an arrangement with Holland for the use of base facilities and acquisition of supplies in the Dutch East Indies.
- C. Give all possible aid to the Chinese Government of Chiang-Kai-Shek.
- D. Send a division of long range heavy cruisers to the Orient, Philippines, or Singapore.
- E. Send two divisions of submarines to the Orient.
- F. Keep the main strength of the U.S. Fleet now in the Pacific in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands.
- G. Insist that the Dutch refuse to grant Japanese demands for undue economic concessions, particularly oil.
- H. Completely embargo all U.S. trade with Japan in collaboration with a similar embargo imposed by the British Empire.

And then the next sentence reads, sir, "If by these means Japan could be led to commit an overt act of war, so much the better."

**Robert Stinnett:** That's right. Yes. And that's what President Roosevelt adopted the very next day.

**Scott Horton:** The very next day – you can trace his orders issued to this memo from the very next calendar day, sir?

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes. See, that memo that you're reading from was dated October 7th, 1940, and the next day, October 8th, the president met in the Oval Office with the Fleet commander, Admiral Richardson, and that's when, as I said earlier, that's when the admiral blew up at the president when he learned that his fleet was to be a lure for a Japanese attack.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. And now, you know, these days our government puts sanctions on everybody all the time for various reasons, but back then to have a complete embargo on steel and oil was considered an act of war in the laws of nations, was it not?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, it was regarded by the, Admiral Kimmel's cryptographers, that he said, "You better raise the red flag because the Japanese are going to be coming at us. This is going to bring them to attack us here at Pearl Harbor." All the Navy people realized what was going on, the ones in the know.

**Scott Horton:** Now, when I was a kid, I learned that it was very lucky that the carriers, that the best of the American Navy was out at sea that day and that at Pearl Harbor were basically the obsolete ships, or mostly obsolete ships. First of all, is that right at all, that –

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes.

**Scott Horton:** – that those were the ships that were taken? And then secondly, was that luck or was that because somebody knew that we need to get the carriers out of here before the Japanese get here?

Washington ordered Admiral Kimmel to take all the modern warships out of Pearl Harbor; that included the two carriers that were there and their supporting ships, maybe about 30 or 40

warships. So all that was left were the old World War I battleships that could only go about 18 knots and they could not keep up with the carriers.

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes, you're absolutely right there. Washington ordered Admiral Kimmel to take all the modern warships out of Pearl Harbor, that included the two carriers that were there and their supporting ships, maybe about 30 or 40 warships, and they were all out of the harbor and they went out on about November 25th, in that time, ostensibly to deliver aircraft to Wake Island and to Midway, but one carrier force just sailed around to be out of the harbor. So all that was left were the old World War I battleships that could only go about 18 knots and they could not keep up with the carriers. Carriers have to go 33 knots so they can launch planes.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. Well why didn't they at least take those World War I ships on, you know, I don't know, the evening of the 6th and at least get them out of the harbor – were they afraid that if they did that that the Japanese would call off the attack?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well that was – that is some of the speculation. There's nothing, no – you know, there have been no reports that I've found, but some people have suggested that you could have left the battleships there, just take all the sailors off the ships and brought them into Honolulu or put them in barracks or something. But then that would have been seen by the Japanese naval spy that Japan had inserted into Honolulu and he may have notified the fleet that they're alert to you. But of course that didn't happen and the spy was reporting to the Japanese carrier fleet that the United States Navy was not on the alert. This is the final week, December 1st through the 6th. He sent two messages that they're not on alert here. They're buying Christmas presents, and it's all clear. This is his exact words, "All clear for a surprise attack on these places."

**Scott Horton:** Well, if you know that now, that must be from sources of people who knew that then at the time that he was sending those messages, right?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, that's right. The radio cryptographers had intercepted these messages because he sent them over RCA cable services from Honolulu to Tokyo, and we had an arrangement with the RCA to get copies of the messages, and they were in a simple code but they could read them pretty much like you could read English.

**Scott Horton:** Now wasn't part of the story that J. Edgar Hoover knew about this spy and was trying to do something about him but the White House intervened or the military intervened?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, Hoover had his agents, FBI agents, in Honolulu tracing him, I think they call it following him, and so they were reporting what he was doing, but they were told just to report, do nothing to interfere with his actions. And so they discovered that he was reporting the census of the fleet, you know, how many warships, how many carriers were in the harbor, the first part when he arrived from March 1941 to about August, and then after August he started reporting bomb plots of Pearl Harbor, that he divided the various anchorages into sections so that they could plan where to bomb the carriers, destroyers and so forth.

**Scott Horton:** And now was there intervention to keep Hoover from – oh, I'm sorry, yes, you did say that, that they were called off.

**Robert Stinnett:** Oh, yes. Hoover tried to get a spy, but no they didn't want – they wanted to know what he was reporting and this showed that Japan was reacting to this overt act of war

policy, action F, you see.

**Scott Horton:** Yeah. I'm sorry, I was distracted because I'm actually looking at the cover of the daily newspaper here in Austin, Texas, and the cover quote is a U.S. Navy veteran from Pearl Harbor, and the headline says, "It didn't seem real," says Pearl Harbor veteran." And I guess there's a little more to that than he may know. Let me ask you, Mr. Stinnett, about MacArthur and the guys at the Philippines. Did they – they just sat back and let the Japanese fleet sail past them to hit Pearl Harbor?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, the Hawaiian commanders, that was General MacArthur, and the admiral there was – I've forgotten his [name](#) at the moment, but they were both given the same order as Admiral Kimmel and General Short: Stand aside and let Japan commit the first overt act. And that's what General MacArthur did, and so did the Navy commander there. General MacArthur kept all of his aircraft on the ground at Clark Field and the admiral kept all of his submarines submerged in Manila Bay. And the idea was to not go on the offense, let Japan commit the first act. And that was the direct order from Washington D.C. that was sent on November 27th, 1941.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. So you can prove that MacArthur received that memo?

**Robert Stinnett:** Oh, yes. He sent a message back to Washington, "Received your message and it's all clear for a successful defense," and I have that document printed in my book.

**Scott Horton:** Incredible. Now, to the justification. I'm – forgive me if this sounds to me like the greatest treason in the history of all mankind, and Hitler conquering Europe or no Hitler conquering Europe, it seems that this is just the most unforgivable human behavior imaginable. How could you justify this, Mr. Stinnett?

Most of those killed was aboard the USS *Arizona*, where Japan had a lucky bomb hit. The bomb went right down the stack of the *Arizona* and into the magazine where all of the shells exploded and killed about 1100 sailors.

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, that, you know, many people, I mention on my book tour, say the same thing as you just said here, but as I say in my book, what other option did the president have? Does he sacrifice men, or do you sacrifice the whole nation of 200 million people, you know? That's the dilemma that he had. And so he decided to order this overt act of war, and there were 3,000 people killed at Pearl Harbor, that was both military and civilians, but most of those killed was aboard the USS *Arizona*, where Japan had a lucky bomb hit. The bomb went right down the stack of the *Arizona* and into the magazine where all of the shells exploded and killed about 1100 sailors on the *Arizona*. So, but you're right, you know. What do you do in a case like this? Are you going to stop Hitler or are you going to let him come over here and take over the United States?

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. Well, I'm not going to argue with you about what may or may not have happened about that, but I do think it's very important that people hear –

**Robert Stinnett:** Oh, I agree with you. You know, I'm just saying that these were the options –

**Scott Horton:** Right, right, I –



**Robert Stinnett:** – and many others are talking about the same thing.

**Scott Horton:** Right, right, yeah, and that's all I mean to say too is that, you know, where I may disagree with you about what should have been done, I think it's very important that people understand that you think that he had no choice and yet you still quote unquote admit that it's true.

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes. Right.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm.

**Robert Stinnett:** You know, he wasn't the first president to use provocations. President Polk in 1846 provoked the Mexican War along the Rio Grande there in Texas, and the USS *Maine* was sunk [...] start the Spanish-American War, Abraham Lincoln used provocations at Fort Sumter against the Confederacy, Woodrow Wilson used provocations in World War I, and we had it with Lyndon Johnson and the Gulf of Tonkin that started the Vietnam war, and we had the same type of policy that George W. Bush used in Iraq in the weapons of mass destruction. So there's a game plan here that really goes back in history where you have this noble lie that justifies going to war against your perceived enemy.

**Scott Horton:** Yeah. And it's very interesting, it's, well, books like yours, sir, with the incredible footnotes and documentation and frankly just solid proof, it does a lot to I think inform a perspective that revisionist history is oftentimes much more accurate than the way people officially remember it, and when you can just rattle off six or seven or ten major wars that the American people have been lied into like that, you know, that, that to me is a slap across the face compared to what I grew up believing America was about, frankly.

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, I felt the same way until I really got into this and started studying it and getting the official documents that prove all these allegations.

**Scott Horton:** And now what's been the response of the World War II historian community? There are a lot of professors and a lot of historians out there who I'm sure your conclusions were quite challenging to theirs. Did they just outright reject what you had to say or have you brought some of them on board?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, I use the polls. The polls would be how many readers agree with me, and amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com are the largest booksellers on the internet, and they give hourly ratings on how books sell. And I have 80%, 70-80% approval rating from my readers, which is, I like to cite there. There's about maybe 20% or 30% that don't agree and will not accept the Navy documents.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. Well, for a subject as controversial as this, I think those are pretty good numbers actually. Let me bring this to your attention here. It's been two years, if I remember right, I tried to get you on the show then and you couldn't do it because of prior arrangements, but I went ahead and wrote a blog entry at antiwar.com called "[Day of Deceit](#)" –

**Robert Stinnett:** Mmhmm.

**Scott Horton:** – explaining here's what I learned from reading Robert Stinnett's book and linking to my two previous interviews of you. And I got a letter from a guy named Patrick D.

Weadon, who is the curator of the National Cryptologic Museum, and he was disputing your claims, and here's what he wrote. It's not that long:

*Mr. Horton:*

*Please be advised that Mr. Stinnett's [sic] book is based on faulty evidence. The book claims that the Allies broke the top Japanese naval code (JN25) prior to December 7th 1941. This is nonsense. Small parts of JN25 were cracked in the early 40s but JN25-B (the upgraded code which was used by the Japanese Navy in days and months leading up to Pearl Harbor) was not cracked until the spring of 1942. If Stinnett's theory is correct it would mean that the United States had forewarning of Japanese naval operations prior to Pearl Harbor but failed to act on the information until June of 1942. This is absurd. In the days and months after Pearl Harbor, the Imperial Army and Navy conquered over a tenth of the earth's surface. The Allies took it on the chin in places like Wake Island, the Philippines, Singapore and Hong Kong. To think that we sat on the information for months and did nothing with it is crazy.*

*Stinnett is right that the information was being collected prior to Pearl, but he is wrong to assert that it was being read. Some years later the JN25 intercepts were deciphered after the fact. They provided strong evidence, that had it been known at the time may have led to our being prepared for the attack.*

So how do you respond to that, Mr. Stinnett?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, very clearly that guy that wrote that to you is totally wrong. It was not called JN25, it was called – the Japanese called their code Code Book D. We called it the Five Number Code, and we broke the Five Number Code, as I report in my book, with the documentation. It was done both in Washington D.C. and at Station CAST on Corregidor, and on November 16th, 1941 the commander of the radio cryptographers on Corregidor sent a message to Washington that we were current in reading and translating and decoding the Japanese naval code, which they call the Five Number Code. That JN25 is part of the cover-up that the National Security Agency sends out as false information. That was not used as a reference until late in the war or really after the war.

**Scott Horton:** Mmm. And we see with the McCollum memo and the corresponding policies of the Roosevelt administration, there's far more to this argument than simply they had cracked this code or this code and must have known. I mean, you're actually showing they cracked this code and this code and they *did* know, and here's how they responded, and here was the policy they came up with, and here are all the different people who were in on it, and, you know, it's not the kind of argument that can be dismissed with a "Well, it was just about this code or that code."

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, that's right. First of all, that letter that the guy wrote to you, he's using the wrong – it was not known as JN25, it was known as the Five Number Code, Edition Number 7, and that's the one that the Navy cryptographers broke. And the earliest date that I could point to that was on November the 12th when President Roosevelt was notified we had broken the code and he said, "Please send me – I want to see all the raw messages." Then the next day, or I think about two days later, General Marshall, who was the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, called in the bureau chiefs of the major newspapers of the United States to his

office. He swore them to secrecy and told them that we had broken the Japanese code and he expected the danger period was going to be the first week of December. This was on November the 15th Washington time, on the same day, November 16th in Manila time, with that other letter from Station CAST where they said they were current in breaking, translating the Japanese code. So there's three major documents that dispute what that fellow wrote to you.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm. Yeah, that's pretty sloppy work for the head of the cryptology administration or whatever it's called there.

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, they're paid to do this. You know, the same thing as this weapons of mass destruction and all that that we've gone through in the Iraq war.

**Scott Horton:** Yep. Now, there's actually a fairly new book out by a guy named George Victor called *The Pearl* – what is it? *The Pearl Harbor Myth* –

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes.

**Scott Horton:** – *Rethinking the Unthinkable*. Have you read that, and do you have a comment?

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes, I've looked over his book, I do have a copy of it, but I was a little disappointed that he didn't go into more of the communication intelligence records at the National Archives. I think it would have made a much stronger book if he had done that.

**Scott Horton:** But he does bolster your case in other ways?

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes, I would say that he probably does that, but he doesn't seem to understand how navies work in sending, you know, dispatching warships by radio, at least in the 1940-41 era.

**Scott Horton:** Mmhmm.

**Robert Stinnett:** But you've got to understand radio. It's just like television and radio stations when you're given traffic information during the commute periods. They're listening to the police radio to know where accidents are, then they warn the people where are the accidents. Well it's the same thing that the navies do. They're sending out messages and if someone listens in and can break the code, then you've got some really valuable information.

**Scott Horton:** Now, do you think that the – if this story can really get established as the history of Pearl Harbor as, you know, most Americans understand it, do you think that will have any effect on the myth surrounding the good war as the foundation of America's current world domination?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, I think that World War II, you're referring to that it has the reputation that it was the last good war, but I think that Americans really when they got into the war, they realized that Germany was the one to defeat, and to rid Germany of their world domination plans really saved the democratic nations of the world. So I think that you can make a case that that was the last good war. Certainly you can't do that for Vietnam or the Iraq war, I wouldn't think, though you know we haven't seen the intercepts. Those have not been released on the

Iraq war, so we don't know really what, until that's released we can't make a real authentic verification of what was going on.

**Scott Horton:** Well, that's true. There's a lot of classified information that hasn't been released, although I think a pretty strong case can be made based on what we do know about the intelligence for this war, but.

**Robert Stinnett:** But I think it'll get even stronger if it's ever released and they don't destroy the records. The *New York Times* today tells how they've destroyed some of the interrogations of I think it was Abu Ghraib, though I don't remember that.

**Scott Horton:** Yeah, I'm not sure if it was Iraq, but it was at least Al Qaeda suspects they said, yeah. Now, you wrote a biography of, before *Day of Deceit*, of the former President Bush, George Bush senior, George Bush: The War Years it's called, and I wonder if you've gotten a comment from him about your later book, *Day of Deceit*?

**Robert Stinnett:** No. My discussions with him were really all about World War II and what we did there on the carrier USS *San Jacinto*. And he was photo officer, the aerial photo officer, and he was also a torpedo bomber pilot, and he was shot down twice by the Japanese, and that's what that was about. I never did talk to him about the communications intelligence because he did not know about the breaking of the Japanese codes either at that time.

**Scott Horton:** Oh, certainly not, back then, yeah. I just thought it would be great if you could get a blurb from former President Bush on the back of your book, huh?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, I sent him a copy but he did not respond to it. You know, I'm not going to press that with him.

**Scott Horton:** (laughs) Oh, no, no. Of course not. Now, let's talk about The Independent Institute. You're a fellow there, and they have an entire set of resources about Pearl Harbor there, don't they?

**Robert Stinnett:** Yes, they do. They have a regular website on it, giving both pros and cons, what some of my critics have said about my book and then also those that are, the 80% that agree with my – or agree with the Navy records.

**Scott Horton:** And now, isn't there a newspaper out in Hawaii, the *Honolulu Record* or something, that has run stories about this?

**Robert Stinnett:** Well, in Honolulu the morning paper is the *Honolulu Advertiser* –

**Scott Horton:** Right, right.

**Robert Stinnett:** – and the afternoon is the *Star-Bulletin*. And if you're referring to the *Advertiser*, on November 30th, 1941, it ran a story with an eight-column headline saying that Japan may attack this weekend. Well they just missed it by one week.

That was based on a story from  
United Press that said that



President Roosevelt was returning hurriedly from his Warm Springs, Georgia, retreat back to Washington on that day, and that carried implications that the *Advertiser* saw was that Japan was ready to do something.

**Scott Horton:** Oh, actually I was referring to stories about you, but that's a very interesting footnote to –

**Robert Stinnett:** Oh, I'm sorry. Oh, no, I didn't realize that.

**Scott Horton:** Yeah. All right. Well, I really appreciate your time today. Everybody, Robert Stinnett. He's a fellow at The Independent Institute, that's independent.org, and the book is *Day of Deceit: The Truth About FDR and Pearl Harbor*. I really appreciate you coming on the show today, sir.

**Robert Stinnett:** Thank you for inviting me.

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About that headline. When I was looking for it, I found [this story](#) as well which appears to predate Stinnett's book:

Joseph Leib, a former New Deal bureaucrat and retired newspaper correspondent, wrote an article which appeared in *Hustler* magazine, "Pearl Harbor: The Story the Rest of the Media Won't Tell," in which he claimed that his friend, Secretary of State Hull, had confided to him on 29 November 1941 that J. Edgar Hoover and FDR knew that the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor within a few days, and that the President, over Hull's strident objections, was going to let this happen as a way to get the country into war. Hull's dilemma was that he could not reveal this openly to the press, since the White House would simply denounce him, and no one would believe him. He turned over to Leib a document containing a transcript of Japanese radio intercepts which supposedly detailed the Pearl Harbor plan, making the reporter promise never to reveal the source. Leib rushed the story, minus the identification of Hull, to the United Press bureau, which refused to run it since it was so incredulous. But Leib did manage to persuade UP's cable editor, Harry Frantz, to transmit it on the foreign cable. Although the story managed somehow to get garbled in transmission, it did create a front-page banner headline in the Sunday, 30 November, *Honolulu Advertiser*: JAPANESE MAY STRIKE OVER WEEKEND! Thus Leib, writing in 1983, has finally cleared up the mystery of the origins of that headline, which has always been a particularly curious part of the Pearl Harbor puzzle. He promises to release more information about his knowledge in other forums.

And it wasn't just the *Advertiser* – the *Hilo Tribune Herald* had the headline too:

But I don't see mention of the





stories on the lower right of the page – London was calling it too?



Sui is her so PLI hel lar

... whc still nee

buy seeds and soil, especially since "Winter is coming," and pay the bills so he can feed the hamsters that power the wheels that turn the servers at The Mighty Corrente Building. Please, won't you help keep the hamsters shiny and well-fed?